

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!

Natural areas present hazards. Rocks roll, trees topple, and limbs drop without warning. Wild animals, uneven ground, and changing weather can pose dangers. People may create other hazards through campfires, traffic, snowplay, and poor decisions.

Water is the main cause of death here. Many drowning victims were walking or climbing near rivers and unexpectedly fell in.

The Park Service works to reduce risks, but your safety is in your hands. Keep alert. Read warnings and ask a ranger for advice.

Be Safe!

DROWNING: is the #1 cause of death in national parks! Be extra careful along rivers and streams; falling in is as dangerous as swimming. Once in a river, getting out can be nearly impossible. Rocks are smooth and slippery; swift, cold water rapidly saps your strength.

PLAGUE: Please do not feed or touch ANY park animals. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry hantavirus.

POISON OAK: This common shrub grows in the foothills up to 5000 feet elevation. Red in fall with whitish berries, bare in winter, in spring its shiny green leaves grow in groups of three. If you touch any part of the plant, wash skin and clothes right away.



TICKS: Common in foothill grasses; check yourself after a walk. Their bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them carefully with tweezers; seek a ranger's and/or doctor's advice.



GIARDIA IN WATER: This protozoan in lakes and streams can cause intestinal distress. Iodine and other chemicals may not be as reliable as heat in killing bacteria or Giardia, but can be effective if used properly. Boil drinking water at least 3 minutes.

WEST NILE VIRUS is passed by bites from infected mosquitos. Human illness is unusual, but avoid mosquito bites.

CARBON MONOXIDE: This odorless, colorless gas can be fatal. Never burn charcoal in closed spaces such as a tent, camper, or RV.

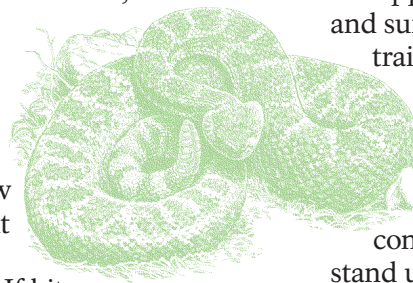
RATTLESNAKES are especially common in the foothills. Watch where you put your hands and feet! They are protected here; do not kill them.

Most bites result from teasing or handling them. Very few people die, but tissue damage can be severe. If bitten, avoid panic; call a ranger or 911.

HYPOTHERMIA: This life-threatening condition can occur year-round. Stay dry and snack often. If others don't respond to the need for warmer clothes or are stumbling, forgetful, or extremely tired and drowsy, get warm sugary drinks into them immediately. Get them into dry clothing, sleeping bags, and shelter.

COUGARS roam throughout the parks, but chances of seeing one are very small. They rarely attack people and pets, but be aware. Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely; never let them run ahead. If you see a cougar, the goal is to convince it that you are not prey and may be dangerous to it:

- Don't run. Cougars associate running with prey and give chase.
- Try to appear as large as possible. Don't crouch or try to hide.
- Hold your ground or back away slowly while facing the lion.
- Pick up children.
- If the lion acts aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw stones or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fight back!
- Report any cougar sightings.



EXPLORE SAFELY: Avoid going alone. Tell someone your plans and return time. Beware of uneven or slippery surfaces. Wear sunglasses and sunscreen. Share roads and trails with people and wildlife.

LIGHTNING: If you see dark clouds or lightning or hear thunder, get inside a large building or a vehicle (not convertible), if possible. Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape such as standing on a ridge, on Moro Rock, or in open meadows. Stay away from open water, wire fences, and metal railings, which can carry lightning from a distance.

SAFE DRINKING WATER: The parks' 13 water systems are tested to ensure that they meet state and federal standards. Annual Consumer Confidence Reports are available at visitor centers.

OZONE POLLUTION: See air-quality index forecasts in visitor centers. Most ozone rises into the Sierra on warm winds. Levels of this colorless gas are highest May to October, peaking in late afternoon. These peaks sometimes reach "unhealthy" state and federal standards and can affect respiratory systems. Ozone forms from gases in car and factory exhaust.

OPERATION NO-GROW

- Prevent illegal marijuana growing.
 - Protect visitor & employee safety.
 - Preserve your natural resources.
- Keep your parks safe and free from illegal activities! Report suspicious activities to 1-888-NPS-CRIME.

Rules of the road

ROAD CONDITIONS

Watch for ice and snowplows. 24-hour recording: 1-559-565-3341 then press 9, then 4.

STILL-ICY ROADS

Spring storms & cold nights can mean slick roads. Slow down on ice; don't make sudden moves.

DON'T LOSE YOUR BRAKES

Always downshift when going downhill. In automatic vehicles, put the gearshift on 1, 2 or L. The engine gets louder as it slows you down, but it will save your brakes.

PREVENT CAR FIRES

Hot brakes & mufflers start fires in dry grass. Don't stop in grassy areas; used paved turnouts only.

LET OTHERS PASS

Slower vehicles must use paved turnouts to let traffic pass.

STAY ON PAVEMENT

Park & travel on pavement only.

BICYCLES

Ride only on roads (not trails), single file with traffic, and wear light colors after dark. People under 18 must wear a helmet.

GASOLINE

No gas stations within the parks themselves. Only Grant Grove market sells cans of emergency gas. Fill up in Three Rivers, Clingan's Junction or in the National Forest at:

- Hume Lake Christian Camp 559-335-2000: year-round 24 hours with credit card. 11 miles (18 km) north of Grant Grove via Hwy 180.
- Stony Creek Village 1-559-565-3909: starting 5/12 weather permitting, available 24 hours with credit card. Between Wuksachi & Grant Grove on the Generals Hwy.
- Kings Canyon Lodge 1-559-335-2405: Open after 4/28; call to confirm. 17 miles (27 km) north from Grant Grove on Hwy 180.

SPRING ROAD OPENINGS

The Generals Highway between Wuksachi in Sequoia Park and Grant Grove in Kings Canyon Park may close during and after snowstorms.

IN KINGS CANYON & NATIONAL FOREST/ SEQUOIA MONUMENT –

- Panoramic Point Road: Opens late spring when conditions allow.
 - Redwood Mountain Road: Unpaved, rough. Not plowed.
 - Big Meadows, Quail Flat/Ten Mile, Converse Basin (FS): Not plowed; opens with snow melt.
- IN SEQUOIA –
- Crystal Cave Road: Open 5/13, weather permitting. Maximum vehicle length 22' (6.7m).
 - Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow Road: Opens when snow melts.
 - Middle Fork Road: Open by 5/19; slippery when wet.
 - Mineral King Road: Opens 5/26, weather permitting. RVs & trailers not recommended (not permitted in campgrounds). Until 5/26, new gate closed at Lookout Point entrance station requires a free permit from Foothills Visitor

Center.

- South Fork Road: Partially unpaved. Slippery when wet.

LENGTH ADVISORY

On 12 narrow miles from Potwisha Campground to Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia Park, advised maximum is 22 feet (6.7m). Maximum length limit on the Generals Highway is 40 feet (12 m) for single vehicles, 50 feet (15 m) for vehicles plus a towed unit. Alternatives: Hwy 180 from Fresno is straighter, less steep, & wider. If you are towing a car, camp in the foothills & use the car to explore.

EMERGENCY CAR REPAIRS

For a tow: 565-3341 then press zero (24 hours). In Sequoia Park only, AAA is available for out-of-gas, lock outs, jump starts, minor repairs: call 565-4070 (24 hours).

MOTORCYCLES

Avoid oil buildup in uphill lanes.

POTENTIAL ROAD DELAYS

Hospital Rock to Giant Forest in Sequoia Park. See page 8.